

REMARKS

Claims 1-19, 21-25, 27-31 and 34-38 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 27-31 are amended. The amendments introduce no new matter. Claims 34 and 35 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in those claims. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 37 and 38, and the indication of allowability regarding claims 27 and 28. The Office Action indicates that claims 27 and 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. The amendments to claims 1 and 29-31 are taken in view of these indications of allowability. As such, the remaining claims are believed to be allowable, as discussed further below.

Claims 2, 3, 8, 9 and 17 are withdrawn from consideration as drawn to non-elected subject matter. Applicant respectfully requests rejoinder and allowance of claims 2, 3, 8, 9 and 17 upon allowance of independent claim 1, from which these claims depend, directly or indirectly.

The Office Action objects to claims 27, 28, 37 and 38. Applicant accepts the Examiner's interpretation of claims 37 and 38, which are allowed. The amendments to claims 27 and 28 obviate the objection with respect to those claims.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to claims 27, 28, 37 and 38 are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 31 and 34-36 under 35 U.S.C. §101. Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, claim 31 is amended to obviate this rejection. Claims 34 and 35 are canceled. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 31 and 36 are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 28, 31 and 34-36 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 34 and 35 are canceled. The amendments to claims 28 and 31 obviate the remaining rejections. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 28, 31 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 4-7, 10-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 29-31 and 34-36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,219,283 to Buckley et al. (hereinafter "Buckley") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,489,843 to Drozd, Jr. (hereinafter "Drozd"); rejects claims 1, 4-7, 10-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 29-31 and 34-36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Buckley in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,592,476 to Yasada. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Without conceding the interpretation, or application, of the applied references, and solely to advance prosecution of this application, claims 1 and 31 are amended to obviate the rejections of those claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). For example, claim 1 is amended to include features similar to the indicated-allowable subject matter of claims 27 and 28. Claim 31 recites similar features.

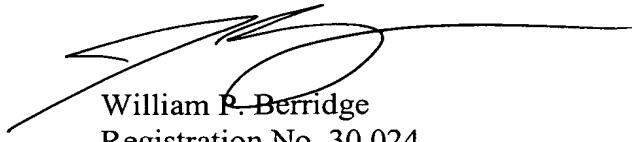
Claims 4-7, 10-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 29, 30 and 36 are likewise allowable at least for the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the applied references are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-19, 21-25, 27-31 and 36, in addition to the previous allowance of claims 37 and 38, are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: January 29, 2008

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